

THE
Infidel Convicted: (4)
OR, A BRIEF
DEFENCE
OF THE
Christian Revelation.

IN WHICH
The Excellency of the CHRISTIAN MORALITY
is fully shewn, and the Consistency of
Revelation with human Reason proved.

Corroborated by Unanswerable ARGUMENTS from
Mr. LOCKE, on whose Writings many Persons
causlessly profess to build their Sceptical Notions.

And Address'd to the
Serious Consideration of the BRITISH YOUTH in general;
and in particular of such of the Young Gentlemen of the
Inns of Court, as are tainted with Atheistical or Deistical
Principles, but are not wholly given up to a Reprobate
Mind.

To which is added, by Way of Postscript,
A Pathetic LETTER from a Father on the Degeneracy of his Son;
and a Word of Advice in relation to the UNIVERSITIES.

Errare est hominis, sed non persistere —

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THE
LAW
OF
DIVISION

OF A HERITAGE

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SECTION

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TO THE
Young Gentlemen
OF
GREAT BRITAIN,
And, particularly, To Those of the
INNS of COURT
In and about this Great
METROPOLIS.



PERMIT me, I beseech ye, young Gentlemen, among the Crowd of Writers that have ingag'd in the present important Controversy, to throw in among you, a little common Sense and plain Reasoning, in Behalf of Christianity, which may possibly affect the Minds of such of you as are not resolutely harden'd against all Conviction.

AS to the principal Leaders of the present Apostacy, I own I have not much Hopes that any thing I shall offer, will have Influence upon them.

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them. They are Persons that seem to be given up to a Reprobate Mind, and their Pride, their Vanity, their Disappointments, their Love of Novelty, or their Gain, may operate so strongly upon them, as to secure them equally against the Possibility of Conviction, and of Repentance.

BUT for such as are only Smatterers in Infidelity, because it is a New Thing; who can have no Worldly Views to gratify by the new-fangled Impieties; who, whatever Loose they may give themselves at present, must, one Time or other, enter into the solid Parts of Living and of Thinking, and may possibly one Day think it Policy, at least, to attempt to keep their Families, Children, and Servants in Order by the sacred Ties of Religion and Piety: For such, I say, I am in some Hopes, that they may be made sensible, on due Reflection, of the Folly of jesting with edg'd Tools, of turning sacred Things into Ridicule, and playing with their Perdition, till it overtake them; till they are given up to a Reprobate Mind, and are thrown headlong, if not into a State of Despondency (for from that their want of Faith may secure them) into a State of final Impenitence.

WHAT I have aim'd at in the following Sheets, is, to accommodate myself to the plainest Capacities, by easy and familiar Reasonings, without entering into the abstruser Points of Divinity; and as Mr. LOCKE is reckon'd upon
by

by some Persons, as the Corner-stone of the present Scepticism; and as a different Use has been doubtless made of his Writings, than he ever intended; I have, in the Course of the Argument, selected a few Paragraphs from that sublime Reasoner, in Vindication of Christianity; which I believe must have a better Effect from him, than from any other Author, as he was a Layman, and not to be suspected of Priestcraft; but, on the contrary, was known to be a strenuous Advocate for Reason, and Liberty of Thinking, and struck out more new and useful Lights in that Way, than any Author of his own, or any other Age.

THE Reason why I address myself not only to the British Youth in general, but particularly to You, Gentlemen, of the Inns of Court about this great City, is, because 'tis too justly to be apprehended, that many of you have taken a very deep Taint of this Infection of Infidelity; insomuch, that many of you affect servilely to repeat, at every Coffee-house Table where you frequent, to the great Offence of all sober Minds, the senseless Buffoonery and lewd Scoffs of the most virulent Apostle that has appear'd since the Time of the Emperor Julian: And it will be a very great Pleasure to me, if the Arguments contain'd in the subsequent Pages, may have the happy Effect to put any of you upon due Reflection; if they are able to confirm the doubting Minds of well-meaning Persons, who may have been shock'd by the bold

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Attacks that have been lately made on the Christian Religion, and to bring back any of you to the regular Paths, which conducted your Fore-fathers to the End of Life with Comfort and Happiness both to themselves and Families.

FOR, let me tell you, young Gentlemen, if your Fathers had given such a Loose to their fanciful Imaginations, as you, their wiser Sons, do, I know not whether the Influences it would have had on their Morals, would not (if you had had a Being at all) have given you, both as to Health and Circumstance, a much other-guise Situation, than that in which you now find yourselves.

'TIS hard to say where a Man may stop, that has brought himself to dispense with those sacred Tests of Religion and Good Manners, which ought to incompas and secure his Virtue. If once the proper Mounds or Boundaries, that are fix'd to with-hold the rapid Waves of Libertinism, come ever so little to be broken thro', the rushing Waters will quickly make themselves a larger Passage: They will impetuously bear down all Obstructions, and will soon overwhelm the fair Pasture of an innocent Mind.

YOU knew the Time yourselves, my dear Friends, when you were shock'd at those Impieties which now your bolder Minds glory in; and you cannot promise yourselves how far short

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of what you may now tremble at (supposing you not totally abandon'd) your present Depravity will lead you.

LET me tell you, Gentlemen, that even a Resolute Course of Piety, is an Up-hill Contention against the Delusions of our own Frailty and Partiality (for, in Complaisance to your present illuminated Tastes, I put the Devil quite out of the Case); No Wonder then, that we are precipitated Down-hill with a Vengeance when we give way to the Deceptions of a depraved Nature; and suffer our Imaginations to run away with our Discretion, as the Devils did with the Swine, till, like them, we are plung'd into the fathomless Abyss of Doubt and Uncertainty.

IT is excellently said, by an ingenious Author, "There is nothing more unreasonable than to neglect and despise plain and sufficient Evidence before us (and such I hope we shall produce in the following Sheets) and to sit down to imagine what kind of Evidence would have pleased us; and then to make the Want of such Evidence an Objection to the Truth; which yet, if well consider'd, would be found to be well establish'd." This is making our wild Fancies and vain Imaginations sit in Judgment upon Revelation, and to determine boldly upon it, as our changeable and erroneous Opinion, or perhaps our Conyenienty or Appetite, which we

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we may nick-name Reason, at the Time suggests to us.

I say, At the Time ; for as positive as you may now be of the Strength of your Reason, it is far from being impossible that you may be hereafter convicted to a quite contrary Sentiment, which may put in as strong a Claim as your present Opinion does, to the Name of Reason ; and even then, you are not sure but you may be afterwards still farther illuminated, and induced to embrace a third Opinion different from both : So fallacious, so variable is what you call Reason ! and so unfit to be set up as an absolute Guide, in Opposition to the unerring and immutable Laws of the Gospel.

I WILL be bold therefore to pronounce, That the more you know, the less you'll doubt, or at least, the more modest you'll be ;-- if but for your own Sakes, lest you should live to change your Opinions ; for why should you believe your Reason is arriv'd at its full Maturity, and that it is so capacious, that it can comprehend every thing ? What Improvement have any of you made in Sciences of any kind, which you have made your particular Study, that should induce you to this extraordinary Opinion of your own finite Reasons and circumscrib'd Understandings ?

ARE there not in the Heavens, in the Earth, in the Air, and in the Waters, innumerable

merable and incomprehensible Wonders, far beyond the Capacity of the clearest and most illuminated Minds to account for by feeble Reason? Will you therefore deny the Evidence of your Senses, to the Existence of such Wonders, because they are beyond your Comprehension?

WHAT surprizing Discoveries have been of late Years made in Science by Sir ISAAC NEWTON, and others! But because most of those Discoveries are Demonstrations only to the Learned Few, must the Generality of the World, (who can neither conceive nor comprehend them) reject them as unworthy of their Belief, for no other Cause than that they are not demonstrable to their weak Reason?

TO descend still lower: How often, even in common Acquirements, which we master by Application only, and which require no great Force of Genius to attain, do we at the Beginning wonder at, and think next to impracticable, those Things, which afterwards become so easy and pleasant to us, that we are surprised that we should ever have thought them difficult?

HOW much less then are the Mysteries of Religion, and those Divine Truths which GOD has not thought fit to submit to the fallible Reason of short-sighted Man, to be rejected, because we cannot account for them, and bring them down to the Level of our weak Understandings?

A F T E R

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AFTER all, I am far from inclining to inculcate such Principles as may lead to an enormous Faith: On the contrary, I think, that a modest and well-regulated Reason is the glorious Privilege of Human Nature; and 'tis the principal Design of these Sheets to prove, That such a Reason is consistent with Revelation, and that Morality and the Law of Nature are so far from being oppugned by the Gospel Dispensation, that they are exalted and made perfect by it.

PERMIT me farther to observe, That as in every Science, the plainest Things are the most useful, so it has pleased God to order it, that in the Christian Revelation, all that is necessary for us to know, for the promoting of our Happiness both Here and Hereafter, lies in a small and easy Compass, and intirely within the Reach of our natural Reason. To what Purpose then have we had so much Bustle made by so many learned Pens, who have set the World in an Uproar, about little more than mere Words, and have disputed so long, that the Practical Part, the Essence of Religion, has been well near lost in the Cloud of Dust they have raised about the Speculative?

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STATION.



THE Infidel Convicted.



TH E Arguments that have been of late produced against Christianity, are far from being *New*, except as to the indecent Manner in which they have been reviv'd. This indeed must be confess'd to be *entirely New*, and seems reserv'd for the Apostates of the *present Age*: While some bold Minds have revived the Doctrines of *Arius*, another has gone beyond *Julian* the Apostle Emperor, in his Insults on the Holy *Jesus*; and the most absurd of the *Heathen Systems* of Religion was never treated in so shocking, so ungentlemanly, so scurrilous a Manner, as the *Gospel of Christ*. As to the rest, the Arguments of late produc'd by the Adversaries to the Christian Faith, are but a Collection of the old *exploded* (and as often *refuted* as *revived*) Doctrines of the Heretics of past Ages.

But for the Sake of such of our Readers, as may not have *Leisure* or *Opportunity* to peruse what has been publish'd of most Importance on

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this Subject, we will summarily touch upon the principal *Objections* which have been made against the *Gospel*, and against the *Resurrection* of our Saviour, which is the Point the Infidels have levelled all their Artillery against, and is the fundamental Article of the Christian Faith, on which all the rest depend. And afterwards we shall bring undeniable Arguments, as we hope, in Defence of Christianity, and to prove, that *Reason* is not inconsistent with *Revelation*; and lastly, produce Evidences, as well from *Pagan* as other Authorities, to prove the Truth of the Christian Dispensation.

To begin with the *Objections* that have been made to invalidate the *Gospel History*, Mr. *Woolston*, asserts (p. 65.) “ That the Four Gospels are, in no Part, a *literal Story*; but a System of * *Mystical Philosophy*, or *Theology*: That the *History of Jesus's Life*, as recorded by the Evangelists, is an *Emblematical Representation* of his *Spiritual Life in the Soul of Man*; and his *continued Miracles, Figures* of his more *mysterious Operations*. ”

THE following impious Paragraph will shew the *Consistency* of this Scoffer; if compar'd with the above; for here he treats those Gospels, not as a System of *Mystical Theology*, but as a vile *Cheat* and *Imposture*.

“ BUT in the Matter of his working *Miracles* (says he, Disc. 6. p. 7.) they [the Evangelists] seem to outstretch one another. Matthew, indeed, is a little sparing and modest in his Ro-

* Ought not this to be sufficient, if it were only so, to exempt this System from the blasphemous Insults with which he treats it, throughout his impious Discourses? “ mance:

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"*mance*: But *Luke* perceiving the Insufficiency
"of his *Tale*, devises a Miracle of a bigger Size:
"And yet this being thought insufficient still,
"*St. John*, rather than his Prophet's Honour
"should fail for want of his Assistance, forges a
"monstrously huge one. — For indeed, (*says*
"*be*, *Disc. 3. p. 49.*) they do not endeavour so
"much as to *lye with a Grace*; nor take they any
"Pains to make their *Stories* hang together."

W H A T are these *Romances*, these *Tales*, these *Stories* which are *devis'd* and *forg'd* by the Evangelists? Why, no less, as he lays above, than their *four Gospels*, which, in the same Pieces, he declares to be a System of *Mystical Theology*, and a Representation of the *Spiritual Life of Jesus* in the *Soul of Man*; — and so are to be made the Subject of his shameless Buffoonery, and virulent Scoffs!

B U T nothing can be more weak and contemptible, than this pretended *Allegorical Meaning* of the Gospel. Can *Mystical Miracles*, and the Cure of *Spiritual Diseases*, be judg'd of by human *Eyes* and *Understandings*? *Obvious Miracles* carry with them a *strong* and *irresistable Conviction*; but how shall we know, that a blind, or a lame, or a leprous *Mind* be cur'd? 'Tis apparently a *Miracle*, to see a lame *Man*, at a Word speaking, take up his Bed and walk; a blind *Man* wondring himself, and inspiring every one with Wonder, who knew him before, and saw him, before their *Eyes*, restor'd to Sight; a leprous *Man* instantly cleans'd, the Sick restor'd, the Dead raised: These are *convincing Miracles*, *Miracles* obvious to *common Sense*, and which *common Understandings* can judge of; and these made the amazed Spectators glorify the God of *Israel*, and say, *This is of a truth*

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the Prophet that should come into the World. Well might this Testimony be extorted, on the Sight of such Wonders, from even the Enemies of his Doctrine, *That this Jesus was a Man approved of God by Miracles, Wonders, and Signs, which God did by him in the midst of all the People.*

BUT pray let me ask any of you, Gentlemen, who are Favourers of Mr. Woolston's Infidelity, how it would have appeared, even to your own more illuminated Understandings, that any of these Cures Spiritualized had been wrought in the *Minds* of Men, so as to have convinc'd you, that the crippled *Understanding* was made to walk ; that the Eyes of the Blind in *Heart* were open'd, and that the Dead and Buried *Lazarus* was an *Allegorical Tale* of a Man dead and buried in *Sin* ?

AND tell me, I beseech ye, how ye will make the Reference of our Saviour to the common *Senses* of John's Disciples, *allegorical and mystical* ? Art thou *be that should come*, or look we for another Saviour, say they? Go your Way, reply'd he, and tell John what Things you have *SEEN* and heard ; how the Blind see, the Lame walk, the Lepers are cleansed, the Deaf hear, the Dead are raised, the Poor have the *Gospel* preached unto them, &c.

WHAT had these Disciples of John *SEEN* ? Why, according to *Woolston*, they had seen no *Literal Miracles* ; but they had found a Way to look into the *Understandings* and *Minds* of Men, and *beheld* wrought in them, a sincere and thorough Reformation : Instead of a *Literal Resurrection* from the Dead, they had seen a Man, and that no *Profligate*, or Person of ill *Character*, or bad *Life* or *Morals*, raised from the Death of *Sin*, to the *Life* of Righteousness : which, by the Way, could

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could not be demonstrated by *immediate Effects*; but must have the Sanction of all his *future Life*, to the last Catastrophe thereof, to verify, and then might, for what they knew, be attended with *inward Insincerity*, and *Hypocrisy*. Where was the *Miracle* of this? or, at least, where was the *Efficacy* of it, to the Spectators on the *Spot*? How could these Performances, which must be *invisible ones*, and not free from *Sceptical Objections*, be said, in *any Sense*, to be *SEEN* by the People, who *immediately* on the *Spot*, gave Glory to God, and look'd upon them as so many Proofs of the Divine Mission of the *Performer*?

A very little *common Sense* taken into this Part of your *Credenda*, would give you a different Turn of Thinking: But if, against all Conviction, you are determin'd to persist, you had better, when the Argument pinches, throw off *all Scripture-Authority* at once: Reject the *whole Canon*; the *Old*, as well as the *New Testament*, because there is among the Prophets sufficient to stagger your Infidelity; and thus, having rejected *Moses* and the *Prophets*, *Jesus*, and his *Apostles*, fix the Foundation of your *Faith* upon *Woolston*, and see what you'll profit by the Change: For a *Blind Faith* most of you * must have, and place *somewhere*: for how few of you are able to judge for yourselves, with all your boasted *Reason*? So that even your very *Infidelity* will take its *Rise*, unawares to yourselves, from the *Enormity* of your *Faith* on those who profess themselves to be *Enemies* of *all Faith*, but what they repose in their own *Self-Conceit* and *Presumption*. So that, after

* "The greatest Part cannot know, and therefore they must believe." *LOCKE Reasonableness of Christianity*, Vol. II. P. 535.
Vol. Edit.

all,

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all, you will find, that you have not renounc'd in *Practice* that *Faith*, which you ridicule in *Words*: You have only made a *Transposition* of your *Faith* from the *best Authorities* to the *worst*, or rather to *none* at all.

BUT what will your Leaders think of their senseless Ridicule, when they are reminded, that even their very *Blasphemy* and *lewd Banters* on the Christian System, are a strong Proof of the Truth of that Dispensation which they are so resolutely bent to deny; and that THEY are the abandon'd Wretches who single out themselves for the Completion of a Prophecy of St. Peter (2 Ep. iii. 3.) *That there shall come in the last Days SCOFFERS?*

THIS must be as shocking a Thought for a reflecting Infidel (if there can be such a Person) to think himself of this abandon'd Number; as it is a singular Mark of the Power of that all-wise Being, who can turn even the *Vices* and *Follies* of Men to his own Glory, and make the very *Apostates* who deride all *Revealed Religion*, Examples of the *Truth* of it, even in the very *Act* of their *Denial*.

THUS much for the contemptible Notion of *Allegorical Miracles*. Let us now from the Tenor of the Christian Doctrines, and the Success they met with, notwithstanding the utmost *Disadvantages*, and *Opposition*, attempt a Proof of their Divine Original.

OF all the Systems of Religion that ever appeared, Christianity was the least adapted to the *Passions* and *Appetites* of Men; being founded on *Self-Denial* and *Suffering*, the hardest Lessons of all others to Mankind; and had it not been sup-

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ported by the irresistible Convictions that were wrought in Mens Minds by the *Miracles* of the *Blessed Founder* of it, and his *Disciples*, what, humanly speaking, could have procur'd it the amazing Success that it was attended with?

'T is true, the apparent *Disinterestedness* of its Divine Propagator, and of his Disciples, who were to encounter so many *Difficulties* and *Oppositions*, and who were to be *persecuted*, *oppreſſed*, and finally put to *cruel Deaths* for the Sake of it, could not but have a great Influence on *unprejudic'd Minds*: For what worldly Grandeur or temporary Ends could Christ have by his Doctrine of *Self-Denyal*? Of *Mortification*? Of *Poverty*? Of *Contempt*? Was it a *Temporal Kingdom*? Would he then, as an excellent * Author, with great Beauty, Strength, and Clearness, intimates, have set up a Doctrine that run counter to all the Expectations and darling Hopes of the Nation he desir'd to reign over? — “The People ex-
“ pected a *victorious Prince*; he told them they
“ were *miftaken*: They held as sacred the *Traditions* of the Elders; he told them, thofe
“ *Traditions* made the Law of God of *none Effect*:
“ They valued themselves for being the *peculiar People* of God; he told them, that People from
“ all *Quarters* of the World should be the *People of God*, and sit down with *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob* in the Kingdom: They thought God
“ could be worshipp'd *only at Jerusalem*; he told
“ them God might and should be worshipped
“ *every where*: They were superstitious in the
“ Observance of the *Sabbath*; he, according to
“ their Reckoning, *broke it frequently*. In a Word,

* Tryal of the Witnesses.

“ their

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“ their Washings of Hands and Pots, their superstitious Distinctions of Meats, their Prayers in Publick, their Villainies in secret, were all reprob'd, exposed, and condemned by him, and the Cry ran strongly against him, that he came to destroy the Law and the Prophets. — And therefore what could tempt him but purely a Regard to Truth, to take upon himself so many Difficulties, which might have been avoided, could he have been but silent, as to the Old Revelation, and left the People to their Imaginations? ”

NOTHING, then, but the Truth and Excellency of the Doctrines he taught, supported by the Disinterestedness of the Founder, and the Miracles he wrought, could have carry'd a Doctrine so contrary to the Expectations of the People, thro' so many amazing Oppositions.

As to the particular Miracles of our Blessed Saviour, they have been so well vindicated by other Authors, that we shall * refer to them, and proceed to that Part of our Undertaking, which leads us to vindicate the Doctrine of Christ's Resurrection, which, as we have observ'd, is the Grand Basis and Support of all the rest, and against which the Infidels have exerted their utmost Strength.

CHRIST Jesus, says the above † Author, declared himself a Prophet, and put the Proof of his Mission on this, That he should die openly and publicly, and rise again the Third Day. This surely, adds he, was the hardest Plot in

* Vide Tryal of the Witnesses; Dr. Pearce; and others.

† Tryal of the Witnesses.

“ the

" the World to be manag'd : And if there be
" one Instance of this Kind, or in any Degree like
" it, by all Means let it be produc'd." And
again, " One would naturally think (says he,
" p. 30.) that the fore-telling his Resurrection,
" and giving such Public Notice to expect it,
" that his keenest Enemies were fully apprized of
" it, carried with it the greatest Mark of sincere
" Dealing."

AND indeed, this open and public Declaration did not a little alarm his Adversaries the Priests and Elders of the Jews ; and they set themselfes to work, by all the Means they could devise, to prevent the Effect of it. They applyed to the Roman Governor for a Guard to watch the Body till the Time was expir'd in which he had declared he would rise again, and used all imaginable Precautions to frustrate the Prophecy, lest, as they said to Pilate, *bis Disciples should steal him away by Night, and so the last Error should be worse than the first.*

BUT why were the Jewish Priests so solicitous to secure the Tomb where the Body of Jesus was interr'd ? Why did they procure a Guard of Roman Soldiers from Pilate ? why seal the Door of the Sepulchre, lest, as they pretended, the Body should be stollen away ? No doubt they were apprehensive of the Truth of his Prediction that he should rise again, and that he that could raise others, was able to raise himself : And what could make them thus apprehensive, but the many Miracles he perform'd in his Life, which gave Credit to this, as they would otherwise have thought, improbable Prediction ?

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HAD any of the *Public Miracles* of Christ been disprov'd: Had he failed in his Professions or his Attempts to cure the *Paralytic*, to give Sight to the *Blind*, or Hearing to the *Deaf*, or Life to the *Dead*, as in the Case of *Jairus's Daughter*, the *Widow's Son*, and *Lazarus*, would he not have been made the Public Scorn and Derision? Would he have dared (the *Repugnancy* of his *Doctrine* to the *Expectation* and *Genius* of the *Jewish Nation*, especially considered) to shew himself abroad? Would his Prophecy have been so much attended to, as to awaken the jealous Rage or blinded Malice of the *Jewish Rulers*, or the Apprehensions of the *Roman Governor*? Had he not himself, in that Case done their own Work for them, and destroy'd, to all Intents and Purposes, his own Reputation? Who believ'd, in our Day, the *French Prophets*, after their Pretences to raise Dr. *Emms* were detected? Did not this destroy those Enthusiaſts all at once? Did they not from that time become the Scorn and Derision of the *Populace*? and were they not afterwards forced to skulk about in Corners, till they were finally dispersed, and dissipated?

WOULD not the *Jewish Rulers* have objected to our Saviour on his Tryal, if he had failed in his miraculous Undertakings, his *Public Frauds*, and *Impostures*, instead of accusing him to *Pilate* of a Design to destroy their Temple, of Blaspheming God, and of subverting their Law? They were so far from this, that even their *public* and *most plausible* Pretence for conspiring to take him off, most evidently demonstrates the Force of their *Conviction* and of their *Malice* at the same Time, and also the *Reality* of his *Miracles*; since they appre-

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apprehended no less, than that the People by reason of those *Miracles*, would revolt in his Favour, and thereby induce the *Romans to take away both their Place and Nation.*

As to the Pretence of the Guards, that the Body was *stollen* while they were *asleep*; If they were *asleep*, as it has by other Writers, with great Significancy, been asked, How came they to be able to relate *so punctually* what happened then? How *critical* must be this Theft? How strange was it, that *all* the Guards should be asleep *at one Time*; and that *so profoundly*, that a *great Stone* should be rolled from the *Door* of the Sepulchre, that was set there to secure it, the *Seals* broken, the *Tomb* opened, the *Body* taken out, the *Burial-Cloaths* taken off, and laid in order by the *Side* thereof: That they should, *after this*, carry out the dead *Body* by the *Way they came*, and perhaps *over the sleeping Soldiers*, who 'tis likely, had dispersed themselves in different Parts of the Avenue. Here was a *critical Juncture* to hit! For could the Disciples *tell*, that the *Soldiers* would be all asleep, and that *so fast asleep*, at the *very Time* they were met to perpetrate the Theft? Could they *hope* for such an Opportunity? Durst they have been seen loitering about the Sepulchre before these *Soldiers* fell asleep, who no doubt were, (if but for the Sake of the *Air*, of *Diversion*, of *shifting the Scene*) often *looking out* into the *open Country* before the *Cave*, and must have seen them, if they had been lurking thereabouts? And if they had discovered any of the Disciples about the Place, or near it, would it not have given a Suspicion that *would have set the Soldiers still more upon their Guard?*

So then, those Disciples, those *intimidated* and *dispersed* Disciples, who durst not shew their Heads

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in Public, one of whom, in Fear, had just before, most remarkably denied his Master, must secretly go from the City to the Cave, without being discovered by a single Soul, and there they must find a whole Band of Soldiers set to watch purposely against them, every Man asleep; yea, as above, so profoundly asleep, that a Work which required divers Actors, great Strength, some Time, and could not be possibly done without Noise, and perhaps, as far as we know, the Soldiers sitting at the very Door of the Cave: Yet, under all these Difficulties, they should be able to steal away the Body, return back with it to the City, or to some remote Place, where it was never heard of as a Corpse: All these Things considered, I see not how these Miracle-bating Gentlemen, can account for such a propitious Juncture, and for the Success of so hardy an Undertaking, without having Recourse to a Miracle, in Spite of their very Infidelity.

We shall only observe, on this Article of the Resurrection, one Thing more. Mr. Woolston thinks it a great Pity, that the Books antiently written against Jesus, are lost, because they would have given an Insight, as he says, into the whole Convinience of his Resurrection.

If there ever were such Books, which is more than he knows, is it not more than probable, that they were sufficiently confuted, or else that the Christian Religion would not have been able to have made such an amazing Progress, as it did, when it was preached only by such mean and illiterate Persons, against the Learning, the Policy, and the Power of this World?

We will venture to add, That perhaps that very Progress, considering the Obstructions and Discouragements

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couragements the Gospel met with, and the despised Conditions and Capacities of its first Propagators, was as great a Miracle, and Instance of a supernatural Influence, as those disputed by the Infidels of the present Age ; and which they would have equal Difficulty to account for by the Measure of their boasted Reason ; and would be as ready to doubt the Truth of it, if they were not obliged by its manifest and apparent Consequences to yield their Assent to it.

ONE Thing more, we will venture to say, will no less puzzle them to account for in their Way ; —'Tis demonstrable, that many of the Prophecies of our Saviour and his Disciples, were extant, and the Records thereof in every one's Hands, long before their Completion ; and yet every one of them has been literally fulfilled since. Of this, the Destruction of Jerusalem and of the Temple, and the unparalell'd Dispersion of the Jews, are flagrant Instances, which stand in full and unquestionable Proof to this Day.

WE must leave it to the wilful Sceptics still to doubt on ; but hope, that what we have observ'd, superadded to the plain Matter of Fact, as related by the Evangelists, will have some Weight to confirm more ingenuous Minds in the Belief of the Resurrection of our Saviour, according to the *Gospel Narrative*, and inspire them with a due Contempt of those vile Sophistries which are used to shake the Foundations of the Christian Faith, and to plunge honest Minds into the unfathomable Ocean of Doubt and Uncertainty.

THE great and avow'd View of the Deists and Sceptics in their Attacks upon Reveal'd Religion,

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gion, is to free the Minds of Men from those *Restraints*, which the Christian Religion imposes upon their *sensual Appetites*, and from the *uneasy Apprehensions* of a *future Account* and *Retribution*. The Two shocking Letters from a *Deist* to his *Friend*, lately published, which were found in the Escritoire of that unhappy Friend, after he had *made away with himself*, in order to experience the *Truth* of a *future State*, sufficiently expose the *iniquitous Design* of this Set of Men ; and the *Observations* made thereupon, printed with them, are so excellent, that we shall content ourselves to refer to them.

If this be the Case, that these Men would let us *loose* to our *Pleasures*, and free us from the *Apprehensions* of a *future Account*, what Security can *Society* have either of their *Honesty*, or of their *Conformity* to those Laws which preserve *Order* among Men, and hinder the World from falling into *Confusion*? Will such Persons boggle at the most *irregular Attempts*, which they think conducive to their present *Pleasures*, and are persuaded of an *Impunity* for ? Will not such Persons find, that even the *Laws of mere Morality* are repugnant to those *Pleasures*; and can there be any Assurance, that Persons so *professedly* abandon'd to their *sensual Appetites*, will be with-held by the *Laws of Society*, much less by a Sense of *Moral Duty*, which they themselves, under the Dominion of their *partial Passions*, are to be the *Judges* of?

Or if we could suppose these *Laws* might be a *sufficient Restraint* upon the Minds of *some* of the Leaders of the present *Scepticism*, and that **THEY** might be allowed to be *Moral Men* ; how will they answer for it, that the *Multitude* will be with-held by the same Considerations ? I doubt it

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it will be found, that, when these hopeful Doctrines are spread among the *ungovernable Many*, and that the *Generality* of Mankind come once to be persuad'd, that they have Nothing but their *present Pleasures* to pursue, and have no *future Account* to dread, they will not stick at any Thing that their irregular Appetites may suggest to them as *Pleasures*? And then the *Plunderers* of the *Road* and of the *Seas*, the *Robbers* of the *Street*, the *fly Thief*, and the *bold Felon* or *Burglar*, may in Time, become *innocent Appellations*, in Comparison of the more *diffus'd Wickedness*, which may then be spread among us: Of which the dreadful Practices of the *Bristol Incendiaries* are a shocking Example: And which, I doubt, are to be attributed, in great measure, to that *loose* and *diffolute Liberty* of late so zealously contended for, and to those *strange Contempts* which have been *fashionable* with some People to put upon *all Religion*. — But be this as it will, can the Scheme of Religion which these Men would propagate, and which must necessarily be attended with very bad Effects in *weak* or *disorderly Minds*, be a *fit Scheme* for the *ungovernable Vulgar*, the *great Majority* of Mankind, who are to be kept in *Awe* only by the prevailing Passions of *Fear* and *Hope*?

IT will be allow'd me, that there are very few, who are fit to be trusted to the Dictates of *their own Reason*. And let our present Sceptics begin with their own *Families*, if they have any, and first free their *Children* and *Servants* from the *uneasy Restraints* that a *future Reckoning* lays upon them, and by their *Conduct*, when set *free*, as they call it, let them judge how much the *Multitude* would be benefited by the *Liberty* they contend to give them.

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BUT after all, what is this *Liberty* of *Free-thinking* they so much talk of? What beneficial Consequences can it be attended with to the *Minds* or *Consciences* of Men? — Can it have any other Effect, than to make Men still greater *Sceptics*, and still more subject to the uneasy Influences of wavering Doubts and melancholy Apprehensions?

THESE cunning Sophisters would rob Mankind of the most comfortable *Hope*, and even *Affurance*, which Revelation gives them, of a *Blessed Futurity*, which will reward their *Sufferings*, their *Sorrows*, and their *Piety* in this *Life*, and encourage them to meet *Death* with joyful *Hopes* of a better: And what would they give them in *Lieu* of this *pleasing Hope*? Why, they would turn them loose into the wide *Sea* of fluctuating *Doubt*; they would dash all their *Comforts* with *Gall* and *Bitterness*; and when they have done all, they will never be able to free them wholly from that cruel *Uncertainty*, which at times will fill their *Minds*, especially in *Pain* or *Sickness*, with unspeakable *Anguish*. An unhappy Instance of this may be produc'd in the poor Gentleman we hinted at above, who could not support *Life* under the *uneasy Burden* of those *Doubts* and *Apprehensions* which his *Deistical Friend* (or rather *Enemy*) had planted in his *Mind*, and therefore plung'd himself headlong into the *Gulph* of *Eternity*, to be rid of that terrible *Incertitude* which was become intolerable to him.

If it be objected, that some of these Gentlemen are, as we may say, *involuntary Sceptics*; that they have some unhappy *Doubts* upon their *Minds* which they would be glad to overcome, but cannot: I answer, that this cannot be the Case of such as set

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set themselves down to write, and to confirm themselves in their Scepticism ; much less of such who publish, and endeavour to propagate their Doubts. A Modest and a Good Man, will keep to himself those Tenets which he would be glad to part with upon being convinced of the Falacy of them, and which he thinks will shock other Persons, or make them as uneasy as himself. He would propose his Doubts in private to such Persons as he conceiv'd had Ability to satisfy 'em, and would, with an unprejudic'd Mind, read such Works as he might be most likely to receive Satisfaction from : And if, after all, he could not submit his Reason to the Opinion of others, and receive the hop'd-for Conviction, he would not apply himself by Writing to fill other Minds with those Scruples, which, but for him, they would never have known.

THE late Mr. Collins once told a Friend of mine, who represented to him, that it was most eligible, even if there should prove to be no future Reckoning, to live in a full Expectation of one ; for that a Disappointment of one Hand, would be of no bad Consequence ; but of the other, most pernicious and dreadful : I say, he told the Gentleman in Answer to this, That he would give all the World to be able to think as he did. And Charity would have induc'd one to hope that Mr. Collins was sincere in this Declaration, had he not endeavour'd zealously to propagate his Doubts, and had he not, without being able to produce for his Opinions an absolute, or even a moral Certainty, endeavour'd also to inculcate into the Minds of Men of less Abilities, who would otherwise have been easy in their Faith and Principles, those Uncertainties which must have been, at times, disturbing to his own Repose.

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THE Example of Mr. LOCKE would much better become such Gentlemen. This great Man made the *Love of Truth* and the *Search after it*, the Grand Motive of all his *Enquiries*: He was so very cautious of shaking *Fundamentals*; that, on the strictest and most impartial Enquiry, being convinc'd of their *Truth*, he set himself to defend them; and was so far from harbouring an over-wearing *Concic* of his own Abilities, great as they were, that he will'd for nothing more than to be convinc'd of his supposed Errors; and the following short *Preface* to his *Reasonableness of Christianity*, ought for ever to stand upon Record as a *Monument* of his *Moderation* and *Sincerity*, as it ought to have procured him better Quarter than he met with from some fiery Zealots of his Time, on Occasion of that very Piece.

" The little Satisfaction and Consistency, says
" he, that is to be found in most of the Systems
" of Divinity I have met with, made me betake
" myself to the sole Reading of the Scripture (to
" which they all appeal) for the Understanding the
" Christian Religion.

" WHAT from thence, by an attentive and
" unbias'd Search, I have received, Reader, I here
" deliver to thee. If by this my Labour thou
" receivest any Light or Confirmation in the Truth,
" join with me in Thanks to the Father of Lights
" for his Condescension to our Understandings.

" IF, upon a fair and unprejudiced Examination,
" thou findest I have mistaken the Sense and Tenor
" of the Gospel, I beseech thee, as a true Christian,
" in the Spirit of the Gospel (which is that of Charity)
and

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" and in the *Words of Sobriety*, set me right in the
" *Doctrine of Salvation*."

HERE is the true Picture of a sincere and unprejudic'd Spirit ! How different is this Instance from those given us by the *Sceptics* of the present Age ! I would recommend this shining Example to the Imitation of such as would be glad to be convinc'd. It would be in vain perhaps to hope it would influence any others : For as to such as, by the Help of their *Presumption* and *Conceit*, have persuaded themselves that they are in the *right*, and have the *Vanity* to believe all other Men in the *wrong*, such will undoubtedly *write*, and endeavour to *propagate* their Notions, and of course disclaim any Pretension to the *modest Hope* of Conviction to a *contrary Sentiment* : Such must be argued with on another Foot, as a *Wh—n* or as a *W—son*, i. e. as thorough-principled Men, the first in *Enthusiasm* and *Conceit*, the Second in downright *Impiety* and *Apostacy* ; and then a * *Godalmin Imposition* may become as much the Subject of the *Belief* of the one, as the *Miracles of Jesus*, the *Ridicule* of the other.

IF it be said, That we have drawn some of our Arguments from *Political Motives* ; And we are of Opinion (say some of these forward Spirits) that Religion is nothing more than *Policy* to keep

* If the Story of the Rabbit-Woman of *Godalmin*, had not been obviated as it was by the Diligence of the *Civil Magistrates*, Mr. *Wa—n*, as we are assured, would have favoured the Public with a *Proof*, that her monstrous Productions were foretold, many Centuries ago in the Book of *Ezras*. Such Force has the Spirit of *Enthusiasm* over even *ingenious Minds* given up to it; and so apt are such People as have renounced the only *proper Standard* of *Faith*, in Favour of their own *vain Conceits*, to be carried away by every Delusion ?

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in Awe *weak Minds*: Suppose it were even as they say, is not this a *sufficient Argument* to inspire us with a due Reverence for Religion?

SUPPOSING such Objectors to be as wise Men in *Reality*, as in their *own Conceits*, do they not think that the *Majority* of Mankind is greatly unfit to be left *at large* in this Respect? Whatever be the Scheme that any of these Gentlemen would propagate, can they be insensible of the Mischief that their shocking of *settled Foundations* must be attended with? How many Persons of *weak Minds*, when they come to be persuaded that they have been imposed on, in the Religion they have been *educated* in, will be brought into an ill Opinion of Religion in *general*, and having lost the *Anchor-hold* of their *Faith*, will be *driven about with every Wind of Doctrine*? What Security can there be, that *Morality* only will hold the Minds of Men, to the proper Observance even of the *Social Duties* of Life, when both *that* and the *Ties of Religion* joined together, are not sufficient to stem the Torrent of Vice and Immorality that is broken in upon us?

LET the *Morals* and *Behaviour* of those Persons who are the lewd *Followers* and *Espousers* of these irreligious Opinions, and who set up for the *Law of Nature*, and for *Morality*, against *Revelation*, be appealed to for the Benefits that are likely to accrue to the *Generality* from the Infidel Schemes endeavour'd to be propagated.

BUT why do I say *Schemes*, when the Broachers of the new-fangled *Notions* seem not to aim at any? When they seem to have no other Point in View, but to *unbingle* the *settled Frame* of Things, to confound all Manner of *Rule* and *Order*, to *pull down* without

without attempting to *build up*, and so to involve every thing in *Confusion*? But were these Men to propose a Scheme of their *own*, let us, by what we have *seen* of their *Performances* and *Attainments*, judge of their *Capacities* for erecting a *new System*, fit to be set up in Opposition to that of *Jesus* and his *Apostles*, which has had the *Sanction* of the greatest *Wits* and *Genius's*, and the *best Men of all Ages*, for upwards of 1600 Years, till the prophanes Scoffers of *Yesterday* arose to controvert it, and that not by *Arguments*, but by senseless and barbarous *Ridicule*,

BUT let us ask these pretended Advocates for *Morality* and *Reason*, in Opposition to *Revelation*, Whether there ever *was*, or *can be*, a *more complete Morality* than the *Gospel* affords us? What is it, then, that they mean, when they talk of their *Morality*, and their *Laws of Nature*? We shall in the Sequel of this Treatise produce some *Arguments* on this Head from the Great Mr. *Locke* that will be exceedingly apposite to this Purpose; but we cannot help anticipating our Intention, in citing his Opinion on this Subject, on an Occasion so remarkable, that it adds *Strength* to his *Judgment*.

We shall, however, first observe, that 'tis possible that Reasons of *Prudence* or *Convenience*, which generally are suppos'd to mean the same thing, may prevail upon a Man, though not to *disguise*, yet to give the *best Side* of his Sentiments, if he be never so sincere. *Good Manners* and *Modesty* will oblige somewhat to this Conduct, to avoid shocking our more *scrupulous Friends*, in declaring ourselves on *dubious Points*, about which they may have a *different Persuasion*; a Regard that must be acknowledg'd to have had very *little*,
if

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if any, Weight with our present *Sceptics*; but which, nevertheless, is the *Duty* of one *Man* to another, in every *Circumstance* of Life, and in which a *Man* of any *Delicacy* at all, will not be wanting.

BUT when we write to a *Friend*, to an *intimate Friend*, who is intirely of the *same Opinion* with us, and much more when we write to a *Friend*, who, from his high *Opinion* of us, is willing to take his *Measures* from us; we then throw off all *Reserves*; we unbosom ourselves to him. To such a one, we *speak*, if *present*; we *write*, if *absent*; we *act*, in *both Cases*, with that noble, that undisguised Freedom, (*knowing*, that 'tis *in Confidence*, and that we have the *Benefit* even of his *Prejudice in our Favour*) that we then utter our *inmost Sentiments*, and hardly think ourselves oblig'd to observe any of those *common Guards* which the *World* deems *Prudential*: For even our very *Failings*, if not *too gross*, have their *Beauties* in a *cordial Friendship*, or at least carry with them *very strong and partial Allowances*: Which puts me in mind of those excellent Lines of one *Friend* on the *Writings* of another:

I read thee over, with a Lover's Eye;
Thou hast no Faults; or I no Faults can spy;
Thou art all Beauty; or all Blindnes I.

For this Reason, the *private Letters* of Great *Men* to their *intimate Friends*, as they speak the *inmost Sentiments* of the *Heart*, are certainly the most *faithful* and most *valuable Repositories* of their *Sentiments*, and are often more to be depended on than their more *elaborate Works*, which they calculate for the *Perusal* of *Enemies* as well as *Friends*.

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THIS being premis'd, the following Instance of the Opinion of Mr. LOCKE with regard to the Point we are upon, will appear to have its due Strength and Efficacy; and though but the Opinion of a *Man*, yet 'tis that of *such* a *Man*, that the World, if it has produc'd his *Equal*, has not (tho' he may not be altogether *perfect*) in any Age produc'd his *Superior* since the inspired Writers, for *Extent of Thought* and *Sublimity of Reasoning*; and with whom are not to be mention'd the *Mushroom Sceptics* that have sprung up since his time, who with the *narrow Souls* and *Conceptions of Pygmies in Sense*, pretend to measure the Capacities of a *Giant*, and to offer to us their *idle Dreams* for the Entertainment of our *waking Senses*.

THIS great *Man* was press'd, Letter after Letter, by his ingenious Friend Mr. MOLYNEUX, to give the World a *Treatise of Morality*, which Mr. LOCKE for some time, put him in hopes of complying with. But at length, as it appears, after the *maturest* Consideration, and having, as he informs him in one of his Letters, put down some Matters relating thereto, as they came into his Mind, he gives him * the following convincing Reason why he could not undertake that arduous Task.

"THE Gospel, says he, contains so *PERFECT* a Body of *ETHICS*, that *REASON* may be excused from that Enquiry, since she may find Man's Duty *clearer and easier* in *REVELATION*, than in *HERSELF*."

* P. 546. Vol. III. Fol. Edit.

AND

AND this is the same great Man, who to the same excellent Friend, in Answer to a Compliment on his incomparable Writings, declares, in another private Letter, " That which makes " my Writings tolerable, *says he*, if any thing, is " only this, That I never write for any thing but " TRUTH, and never publish any thing to others, " which I am not fully perswaded of myself, and " do not think, that I understand."

LET the *wilful* Sceptics, who at the same time oppose to *Revelation* their own weak Reason, and Opinions *only* (and from whom therefore the Objection, would come with a very ill Grace) say, if they please, that this is no more than *human Authority*; and let them by so slight an Answer pass upon their own Sense, *determin'd* to remain unconvinc'd, *a seeming* Reason for their *continued* Infidelity; But let them not attempt to put this upon the *undoubting* Part of Mankind for a *sufficient* Reason, why *they* should renounce the *settled Faith* of their Ancestors: Let them give a Reason why, on a *due Comparison*, their *own Authority* and *meer Opinions*, ought to be preferr'd to those of Mr. LOCKE; and let them prove him to be in the wrong in what he asserts. Furthermore,

LET them prove, that *Reason* and *Revelation*, are incompatible with each other; and that the Gospel does not contain the *most excellent* System of *Morality* that ever was brought to Light: And let them also prove, that *before* the Gospel, a *more perfect* and *more eligible* Scheme of Morality was communicated to Mankind by the *Light of Nature*; or even that such a one is to be *collected* from the Writings of the Philosophers of

all

all Nations and of all Ages, put together, throughout the World from the Beginning of Time 'till the Promulgation of the Gospel: And by this Standard let them judge of their own Scepticism, and of the Pretences and false Glasses of such as would destroy Revelation, and on its Ruins build up the exploded or imperfect Notions of Philosophers, or their own still weaker and more imperfect Reason.

We shall, in the next Place, produce some Arguments from Mr. LOCKE, in Defence of Christianity; and we single out this great Man, not only on the Account of his extraordinary Merit and Sincerity, but because many of our Free-thinkers pretend to found upon his admirable Writings those Notions which were abhorrent to his Faith and Principles, however he might be thought to differ in some * smaller Points from the generally received Opinions of his Time; which were it true that he did, gives greater Strength to the Arguments we shall extract from him; since neither Superstition nor implicite Faith could be imputed to him, and that he could not be influenc'd by what he thought an Error, tho' establish'd.

* We are sensible, that Dr. HOLDSWORTH, and others, have, of late, since Mr. Locke's Death, taken much Pains to prove Heterodoxy in several Points on that great Genius: but tho' we think it easy to demonstrate, that they have strain'd the Point too much, and that their Arguments would not have been able to have stood against his powerful Pen; yet we shall only observe at present, that they have done the highest Difservice, in our humble Opinion, to the Cause they espouse with so much College-Warmth, by endeavouring to rob the Orthodox World of so glorious a Champion and Ornament; and by consigning him over to that Class of Free-thinkers and Sceptics, to which all his Writings manifestly demonstrate he was an Adverlary.

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IN his excellent * Treatise, intitled, *The Reasonableness of Christianity, as delivered in the Scriptures*, he gives a kind of Historical Deduction of the *Life* and *Miracles* of our SAVIOUR, and brings irrefragable Proofs of his being the *Messiah*, and in many Places accounts, in the most plain and convincing Manner, for several of those Difficulties which are the Foundation of Mr. Woolston's execrable Railery against the *Miracles* of our Saviour, and which, if that Scoffer had attended to, would have prevented his *Scurrility*, and, in many Places, his *Blasphemy*, if he had not been predetermin'd, at all Adventures, as seems to have been the Case, to prosecute his Infidel Scheme.

We shall first produce an Instance of the Firmness of Mr. LOCKE's Belief, in the *Doctrine* and *Miracles* of Christ. Page 490 of that Tract, he gives the Reason why our Saviour did not profess himself exprely, on severall Occasions, to be the *Messiah*, but on the contrary, forbad his Disciples asserting him to be so, and says, " It was because " the whole Nation of the *Jews*, expecting at this " Time, their *Messiah*, and *Deliverance* by him " from the Subjection they were in to a foreign " Yoke, the Body of the People would certainly, " upon the declaring himself to be the *Messiah* their " King, have rose up in Rebellion, and set him at " the Head of them.

" And indeed, says he, the *Miracles* that he did, " so much dispos'd them to think him to be the " *Messiah*, that tho' shrouded under the Obscurity " of a mean Condition, and a very private simple

* Vide Vol. II. Fol. Edit. p. 471.

" Life

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“ Life [which was so opposite to the Splendour in
“ which they expected their Deliverer to appear] tho’
“ he passed for a Galilean (his Birth at Bethlehem
“ being then concealed) and assumed not to himself
“ any Power and Authority, or so much as the
“ Name of the Messiah, yet he could hardly avoid
“ being set up by a Tumult, and proclaim’d their
“ King. This, continues he, was upon his feeding
“ 5000 with five Barley-Loaves and two Fishes. So
“ hard was it for him doing those Miracles which
“ were necessary to testify his Mission, and which
“ often drew great Multitudes after him, to keep
“ the heady and hasty Multitude from such Dis-
“ order, as would have involved him in it, and
“ have disturbed the Course and cut short the Time
“ of his Ministry, and drawn on him the Reputa-
“ tion and Death of a turbulent seditious Male-
“ factor, contrary to the Design of his Coming,
“ which was to be offered up a Lamb, blameless
“ and void of Offence, his Innocence appearing to
“ all the World, even to him that delivered him up
“ to be crucified.”

THIS great Man did not think it enough to prove the Doctrines and Miracles of our Saviour conducive to the Ends of his Divine Mission: He goes farther, and proves, that the *Revelation* dispensed by him, was confirmatory of the most exalted Points of REASON, and that the Belief and Worship of ONE GOD among the Jews, in Opposition to the Polytheism of the antient Heathens, was owing likewise to *Revelation*: Whence it naturally results, that both Jews and Infidels (if their Quarrel be against the Christian Revelation, as such, and their Reliance only on what they call the Religion of Nature) have as much Reason to renounce that first Revelation, which taught them to worship only one God, and so to turn Idolaters and Heathens, as

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they have to reject the *Second* introduced by *Jesus Christ*, which was an *Inforcement* and *Corroboration* of the *other*, and differ'd in nothing but dispensing a *more noble and perfect Morality*, and diffusing all over the *World* that Divine Knowledge of *God* which was before confined to a *despicable Corner* of the *Earth*, and to a *contemned People*, making the *Gentiles* Partakers of those Benefits which were first offered to the *Jews*, and rejected by them.

BUT let us hear our Author, who, * speaking of the *Imperfection* of the *Heathen Morality*, and of the *Light of unassisted Reason*, which had not been able to keep the *Generality* of Mankind from the grossest *Idolatry*, the Worship of many false Gods, says : “ The Belief and Worship of one God was “ the *National Religion* of the *Israelites alone* ; “ and if we will consider it, it was introduced “ and supported amongst the People by R E V E -
“ L A T I O N .

“ T H E R E was no Part of Mankind, who had
“ quicker Parts, or improv'd them more, than had
“ a greater Light of REASON, or follow'd it farther,
“ in all Sorts of Speculations, than the *Athenians* ;
“ And yet we find but ONE Socrates amongst
“ them, that oppos'd and laugh'd at their Poly-
“ theism, and wrong Opinions of the Deity ; and
“ we see how they rewarded him for it. What-
“ soever PLATO and the soberest of the Philoso-
“ phers thought of the *Nature* and *Being* of the
“ ONE GOD, they were fain, in their outward
“ Professions and Worship, to go with the Herd,
“ and keep to the Religion establish'd by Law ;
“ which what it was, and how it had dispos'd

* P. 530, 531. “ the

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" the Minds of these quick-sighted Græcians, St.
" Paul tells us (*Acts xvii. 22 - 29.*)

" *YE Men of Athens, says he, I perceive that
in all Things ye are too superstitious: For as I
passed by and beheld your Devotions, I found an
Altar with this Inscription, To THE UNKNOWN
GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship,
HIM declare I unto you: God that made the
World, and all Things therein, seeing that he is
LORD of Heaven and Earth, dwelleth not in
Temples made with Hands: Neither is worshipped
with Mens Hands, as tho' he needed any Thing,
seeing he giveth unto all Life and Breath, and all
Things, and hath made of one Blood all the Na-
tions of Men, for to dwell on the Face of the Earth;
and hath determined the Times before appointed, and
the Bounds of their Habitations; That they should
seek the LORD, if haply they might feel him out,
and find him, tho' he be not far from every one
of us.*

" *HERE he tells the Athenians, that they and
the rest of the World, (given up to Superstition)
what-ever Light there was in the Works of
Creation and Providence to lead them to the
TRUE GOD, yet they few of them found him.
He was every where near them, yet they were
but like People groping and feeling for some-
thing in the Dark, and did not see him with
a full and clear Day-light; but thought the God-
head like to Gold, and Silver, and Stone, graven by
Art and Man's Device.*

" *IN this State of Darkness and Error, in re-
ference to the TRUE GOD, our Saviour found
the World: But the clear REVELATION
he brought with him, dissipated this Dark-
ness;*

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“ ness ; made the *One Invisible true God* known
“ to the World ; and that with such *Evidence*
“ and *Energy*, that *Polytheism* and *Idolatry* hath
“ no more been able to withstand it : But
“ where-ever the Preaching of the Truth he de-
“ livered, and the Light of the Gospel hath
“ come, those Mists have been dispell’d. And,
“ in Effect, we see, that since our Saviour’s
“ Time the *Belief of one God*, has prevail’d and
“ spread itself over the Earth. For even to the
“ Light that the *Messiah* brought into the World
“ with him, we must ascribe the Owning and
“ Profession of *One God* which the *Mahometan*
“ Religion had *derived* and *borrowed* from it.
“ So that in this Sense, it is certainly and ma-
“ nifestly true what St. John says of him ; *For*
“ *this Purpose the Son of God was manifested, that*
“ *he might destroy the Works of the Devil*. This
“ *Light* the World *NEEDED*, and this *Light* it
“ *RECEIVED* from *HIM*, That there is but *ONE*
“ *God*, and *HE Eternal, Invisible*, not *like to*
“ *any visible Objects*, not to be *represented* by
“ *them*.

“ If it be asked, whether the *Revelation* to the
“ *Patriarchs* by *Moses*, did not teach *this*, and
“ why that was not *enough* ? the Answer is ob-
“ vious : That however clearly the Knowledge of
“ *One Invisible God*, Maker of Heaven and Earth,
“ was revealed to them ; yet that *Revelation* was
“ shut up in a little *Corner* of the World, amongst
“ a People by that very Law which they re-
“ ceiv’d with it, excluded from a *Commerce* and
“ *Communication* with the rest of Mankind. The
“ *Gentile* World in our Saviour’s Time, and se-
“ veral Ages before, could have no Attestation
“ of the *Miracles* on which the *Hebrews* built
“ their Faith, but from the *Jews* themselves,
“ a People

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" a People not known to the greatest Part of
" Mankind, contemn'd and thought vilely of by
" those Nations that did know them ; and there-
" fore very *unfit* and *unable* to propagate the
" Doctrine of ONE God in the World, and
" diffuse it thro' the Nations of the Earth, by
" the Strength and Force of that *ancient Reve-*
" *lation*, upon which they had received it. "

By this our *modern Scoffers* and *Sceptics* will perceive, that they have the same Reason, as we observ'd above, to espouse *Polytheism* and *Idolatry*, as they have to reject the *Christian System*; since the *Doctrine* and *Knowledge* of One God was founded upon *REVELATION* as well as *that*.

" But our Saviour, continues Mr. Locke
" very excellently, when He came, threw down
" this Wall of *Partition*, and did not confine his
" Miracles or *Message* to the Land of *Canaan*,
" or the Worshippers of *Jerusalem*: But he him-
" self preached at *Samaria*, and did *Miracles* in
" the Borders of *Tyre* and *Sydon*, and before
" Multitudes of People gather'd from all *Quar-*
" *ters*. And after his *Resurrection* sent his *Apo-*
" *stles* amongst the Nations, accompany'd with
" *Miracles*; which were done in all *Parts* so fre-
" quently, and before so many *Witnesses* of all *Sort's*,
" in broad *Day-light*, that, as I have before ob-
" served, the *Enemies* of *Christianity* have never
" dared to deny them; no, not *JULIAN* himself,
" who neither wanted *Skill* nor *Power* to inquire into
" the *Truth*; nor would have failed to have pro-
" claimed and exposed it, if he could have detected
" any *Falsehood* in the *History* of the *Gospel*, or
" found the least *Ground* to question the *Matter*
" of *Fact*, publish'd of *Christ* and his *Apostles*.
" The Number and Evidence of the *Miracles* done
" by

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" by our Saviour and his *Followers*, by the *Power*
" and *Force* of *Truth*, bore down this mighty and
" accomplish'd *Emperor*, and all his *Paris*, in
" his own *Dominions*. He durst not deny so plain
" *Matter of Fact*, which being granted, the *Truth*
" of our Saviour's *Doctrine* and *Mission* unavoid-
" ably follows; notwithstanding whatsoever art-
" ful Suggestions his *Wit* could invent, or *Malice*
" should offer, to the contrary."

WHAT this Learned *Apostate Emperor* could
not deny so many hundred Years nearer the Time
of our *Saviour*, an *Apostate Clergyman*, equal to
that *Prince* in nothing but his *Impiety* and *Blas-
phemy*, in a manner unbecoming a *Man of Letters*,
even though it were the *absurdest* of the *Heathen
Schemes*, *ridicules* and *blasphemies*, without *Com-
punction*, in the *present Age*?

BUT leaving him for the present, let us apply
the following noble Passages of our Author, in
the same Treatise, to such as would set up *Mo-
rality*, and the *Religion of Nature* against the *Chris-
tian System*, and who would separate *Reason* from
Revelation, as *inconsistent* with each other, and so
would use the *first*, to destroy the *last*, which is
the Scheme of the present *Deists* and *Sceptics*: From
which, joined with what we have already quoted
from him, the *Superior Excellency* of the *Christian
Dispensation* will be manifested beyond all Con-
tradiction, by one of the sublimest Genius's that
our Nation has produced; who had made the
Study of the *Scriptures* the chosen *Employment* of
his *riper Years*, and who had no *Worldly View* or
Interest to gratify, by the *Zeal* wherewith he
espoused and *vindicated*, after the *strictest Examina-
tion*, and *maturest Deliberation*, the *Faith* and *Mi-
racles* of Christ.

P. 532. he says, " So much Virtue as was necessary to hold Societies together, and to contribute to the Quiet of Government, the Civil Laws of Commonwealths taught [In the Times before the Gospel] and forced upon Men that lived under Magistrates : But these Laws being for the most Part made by such who had no other Aims but their own Power, reach'd no farther than those Things, that would serve to tie Men in Subjection ; or at most were directly to conduce to the Prosperity and temporal Happiness of any People.

" BUT Natural Religion, in its full Extent, was no where, that I know of, taken Care of, by the Force of natural Reason. It should seem by the little that had hitherto been done in it, that 'tis too hard a Task for unassisted Reason, to establish Morality in all its Parts upon its true Foundation, with a clear and convincing Light. And 'tis, at least, a surer and shorter Way, to the Apprehensions of the Vulgar, and Mass of Mankind, that One manifestly sent from God, and coming with visible Authority from HIM, should, as a King and Law-Maker, tell them their Duties and require their Obedience, than leave it to the long, and, sometimes, intricate Deductions of Reason, to be made out to them.

" SUCH Trains of Reasonings, the greatest Part of Mankind have neither Leisure to weigh, nor, for Want of Education and Use, Skill to judge of."

WHAT is it then that our present Sceptics are aiming to propagate ? — Can their System, at the best, be fit for any but Scholars ? And in that

F Case,

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Case, What an *imperfect* Scheme of Religion must *that* be, that excludes the *Bulk* of *Mankind* from the *Knowledge* of it? Must not the *Generality* of the *World*, who are incapable of *making*, or perhaps of *comprehending*, those *intricate Deductions*, pin their *Faith* upon the *arbitrary Deductions* of those whose *Education* had given them more *Leisure* and *Skill* to make them? And would not this give *Rise* to a much more *wide*, a much more *enormous* and *uncertain* *Faith*, than that required by the *Christian Revelation*, which some of these *Reasoners* take such *Pains* to *invalidate*? — But let us pursue our Author.

“ We see how unsuccessful in THIS, says he,
“ the Attempts of Philosophers were before our
“ SAVIOUR’s Time. How short their several
“ Systems came of the Perfection of a true and
“ complete Morality, is very visible: And if since
“ that, the *Christian Philosophers* have much out-
“ done them, yet we may observe, that the first
“ Knowledge of the Truths they have added,
“ are owing to REVELATION, tho’ as soon as
“ they are heard and considered, they are found
“ to be agreeable to REASON, and such as can by
“ no means be contradicted.

“ EXPERIENCE shews, that the Knowledge
“ of Morality, by mere natural Lights (how agree-
“ able soever it be to it) makes but a slow Pro-
“ gress, and little Advance in the World. And
“ the Reason of it is not hard to be found in
“ Mens Necessities, Passions, Vices, and mistaken
“ Interests, which turn their Thoughts another
“ Way: And the designing Leaders, as well as
“ following Herd, find it not to their Purpose to
“ employ much of their Time this Way: On
“ whatever else was the Cause, ‘tis plain in Fact,
“ that

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" that *Human Reason unassisted*, failed Men in its " great and proper Business of *Morality*. It never " from unquestionable Principles, by clear De- " ductions, made out an *intire Body* of the *Law* " of *Nature*. And he that shall collect all the " Moral Rules of the *Philosophers*, and compare " them with those contained in the *New Testament*, " will find them to come short of the *Morality* " delivered by our *Saviour*, and taught by his " *Apostles*; a College made up for the most Part " of *ignorant*, but *inspired Fishermen*. "

IF this be the Case, as certainly it is, what can those Men mean, who treat the *Scriptures* in *General*, and the *Gospel* in *particular*, with so much *Virulence* and *Contempt*? What can be the Meaning of the *Multitude* of Pamphlets and Books written to distinguish away *Revelation*, in Favour of *Morality* and the *Law of Nature*, when they are intirely *confisent* with one another? Why is *Human Reason* opposed to *Divine Revelation*, and so many Learned Men set to quarrel about *Words*, when the *Christian Dispensation* so strongly *requires*, and *unites* them both, and they are corroborative of one another?

YOU have here before you, not only the *Opinion* (theirs is all that our Adversaries offer to you) but the unanswerable *Arguments* of the greatest Genius of his Age, to whom the Leaders of the present *Scepticism*, if compar'd, as to *Perfpicuity* and *Force* of their so much *Boasted Reasoning*, and to *sound Sense*, *Sincerity*, *Affection to Truth* and *Learning*, are mere Men of Straw. He proves, That *Reason* is so far from being *impaired* by *Revelation*, that it is *exalted*, and made *perfect* by it, and without it, was but a *blind* and *uncertain Guide* to *Mankind*.

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As the *Testimony* and *Arguments* of this admirable Author, are worth a thousand Evidences, because of his *Disinterestedness* in the Cause, as to *Worldly Views*, his *Capacity*, his *Diligence* to search after Truth, and the Contempt he had for even *establish'd Errors* of every kind, which he was so earnest to *combate* and *confute*, that the *Sceptics* have, tho' against all Cause, made a bold *Claim* to him, as *theirs*; which *Claim* many excellent Divines influenced by their *Prejudices*, and perhaps by an *undue Warmth* of Temper, have also too much favour'd; and as he was undoubtedly the greatest Friend to *Reason* and *Morality* that these latter Ages have produced; and, moreover, as this excellent Treatise of the *Reasonableness* of *Christianity*, can be but in few Hands, and, one would be tempted to think, (by the *Usage* he has received of *one Side*, and the *Claim* made to him on the *other*) in the *Knowledge* of Few; All these Things considered, I am sure I shall be indulged with another Quotation or two from him, on the Topics of *Reason*, *Natural Religion* and *Morality*, which are become such very *fashionable Points* of Controversy among the doughty Disputants of our Time.

IN the following Paragraph he puts the *Merits* of the *Heathen Morality* in the *strongest Light* that they can possibly appear in; and then argues with irresistible Force of *Reason*, on the *Necessity* there still remained for the *Gospel Revelation*, and demonstrates the *superior Excellency* of the *Christian Morality*.

“ IF any one should think, *says he*, that out
“ of the *Sayings* of the wise Heathens, before our
“ Saviour's Time, there might be a *Collection*
“ made of all those *Rules of Morality*, which are

to

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" to be found in the *Christian Religion*; yet this
" would not at all hinder, but that the World,
" nevertheless, stood as much in *Need* of our Sa-
" viour and the *Morality* delivered by HIM. Let
" it be granted, tho' not true, that *all* the *moral*
" *Precepts* of the *Gospel* were known by *somebody*
" or other, amongst Mankind, *before*: But where,
" or how, or of *what Use* is not consider'd.

" SUPPOSE they may be pick'd up here and
" there: Some from *SOLON* and *BIAS* in *Greece*;
" others from *TULLY* in *Italy*; and, to complete
" the Work, let * *CONFUCIUS* as far as *China*,
" be consulted; and † *ANACHARSIS* the *Scythian*
" contribute his Share: What will all this do, to
" give the World a *complete Morality*, that may
" be to Mankind the *unquestionable Rule of Life*
" and *Manners*?

" I WILL not here urge the *Impossibility* of col-
" lecting from Men so far *distant* from one an-
" other in *Time*, and *Place*, and *Language*. I will
" suppose there was a || *STOBÆUS* in those Times,
" who had gather'd the *moral Sayings* from all the
" Sages of the World: What would this amount
" to, towards being a *steady Rule*, a *certain Tran-*
" *script* of a *Law* that we are under? Did the

* An excellent Philosopher, so much venerated by the *Chi-
nese*, that the Popish Missionaries have not been able to profelyte
any of those People to the Faith of Christ, but by blending his
Morality with that of Christianity.

† He invented the Potter's Wheel, went barefoot, despised
Money, slept on the Ground; and was so temperate among the
intemperate *Scythians*, that he gave Occasion to that Proverb,
ANACHARSIS INTER-SCYTAS. He was wont to compare the
Laws to Cobwebs, that caught poor Flies, but let the Wasps escape.

|| An antient Author of choice *Greek Sentences*, and two
Books of Eclogues, one of Physics, and the other of Ethics.

" *Saying*

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" Saying of * ARISTIPPUS or CONFUCIUS give
" it an Authority? Was ZENO a Lawgiver to
" Mankind? If not, what he, or any other Phi-
" losopher deliver'd, was but a *Saying* of his.
" Mankind might *bearken* to it, or *reject* it, as
" they pleas'd, or as it suited their *Interests, Passions, Principles, or Humours*. They were under
" no Obligation: The Opinion of *this* or *that* Phi-
" losopher was of no Authority. And if it were,
" you must take *all* he said under the *same* Cha-
" racter. All his Dictates must go for Law, cer-
" tain and true, or *none* of them: And then, if
" you will take any of the moral Sayings of EPI-
" CURUS (many whereof SENECA quotes with
" Esteem and Approbation) for Precepts of the
" Law of Nature, you must take *all* the rest of
" his Doctrine for such too, or else his Authority
" ceases. So no more is to be received from him,
" or any of the Sages of old, for *Parts* of the
" Law of Nature, as carrying with it an Obliga-
" tion to be obey'd, but what they prove to
" be so.

HERE the Reader will allow us to infer, That
if the Precepts and Opinions of CONFUCIUS,
ZENO, BIAS, ANACHARSIS, EPICURUS, SOLON,
TULLY, SENECA, &c. all collected together, would
form so imperfect a System of Morality, how much
less Dependance can be made on the Atheistical and
Deistical Schemes which are now endeavour'd to be
propagated by Men so infinitely inferior to any
of them?

" BUT such a Body of Ethics, (continues our
" Author) proved to be the Law of Nature from

* A Cyrenian Philosopher, who used the Pleasures he had,
and despis'd those he did not.

" Principles

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" Principles of Reason, and reaching all the Duties of Life, I think no-body will say, the World had, before our Saviour's Time.

Yet this, we cannot but observe, is the *same* Law, and the same Saviour, that are become the Subject of the profane Scoffs and Banter of the Infidels of this enlighten'd Age!

" 'Tis not enough, continues Mr. Locke, that there were up and down scatter'd Sayings of wise Men, conformable to right Reason: The Law of NATURE is the Law of CONVENIENCE too; and 'tis no wonder, that those Men of Parts and studious of Virtue, who had occasion to think on any particular Part of it, should, by Meditation light on the right, even from the observable Convenience and Beauty of it, without making out its Obligation from the true Principles of the Law of Nature, and Foundation of Morality.

" BUT these incoherent Apothegms of Philosophers and wise Men, however excellent in themselves, and well-intended by them, could never make a Morality whereof the World could be convinced; could never rise to the Force of a Law that Mankind could with Certainty depend on.

" WHATSOEVER should thus be universally useful, as a Standard to which Men should conform their Manners, must have its Authority either from REASON OR REVELATION.

" HE that any one will pretend to set up as a Lawgiver to Mankind, and to have his Rules pass for authentic Directions, must shew, that either

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“ either he builds his Doctrine upon Principles of
“ REASON, *self-evident* in *themselves*, and that he
“ deduces all the Parts of it from thence, by *clear*
“ and *evident* Demonstration; or must shew his
“ Commission from HEAVEN, that he comes with
“ Authority from GOD, to deliver his Will and
“ Command to the World. In the former Way,
“ no-body, that I know, before our Saviour’s
“ Time, ever did, or went about to give us a
“ Morality.

“ ‘T IS true, there is a *Law of Nature*; but
“ who is there that ever did, or undertook to give
“ it us all *intire*, as a *Law*, no *more* nor no *less*
“ than what was contain’d in, and had the *Obliga-*
“ *tion* of that *Law*? Who ever made out *all*
“ the *Parts* of it, put them *together*, and shew’d
“ the *World* their *Obligation*? Where was there
“ any such *Code*, that Mankind might have Re-
“ course to, as their *unerring* Rule, before our
“ Saviour’s Time? If there was *not*, ‘tis plain,
“ there was *NEED* of one to give us *such* a *Mora-*
“ *lity*, *such* a *Law*, which might be the *sure* Guide
“ of those who had a *Desire* to go right,— and
“ might be certain when they had *perform’d*, when
“ *fail’d* in their *Duty*.

“ *SUCH* a *Law of Morality* JESUS CHRIST
“ hath given us in the *New Testament*; but by the
“ latter of those Ways, by *REVELATION*. We
“ have from HIM a *full* and *sufficient* Rule for our
“ *Direction*, and *conformable* to that of *REASON*.
“ But the *Truth* and *Obligation* of its *Precepts* have
“ their *Force*, and are *past Doubt* to us, by the
“ *Evidence* of his *Mission*. HE WAS SENT BY
“ GOD: His *MIRACLES* shew it; and the Au-
“ thority of GOD in his *Precepts* cannot be *question’d*.

“ HERE

"HERE Morality has a *sure Standard*, that
"REVELATION *vouches*, and REASON cannot
"gainsay, nor question; but BOTH TOGETHER
"witness to come from GOD the great *Law-maker*.
"And such an one as *This* out of the *New Testament*,
"I think the World never had, nor can any
"one say is any where else to be found."

THIS great Author pursues the Argument in an equally strong and advantageous Manner; but this is enough for our present Purpose, and I content myself to refer to the Piece itself, those Gentlemen who are not so far gone in Infidelity, but that they would be glad to have *Reason* to approve of the Faith and Religion of their Forefathers,

WITH regard to such as are so much farther gone in Infidelity, that they can join in *blaspheming* and *ridiculing* the *Miracles of Christ*, the *Divinity* of his *Person*, and the *Doctrines of Christianity*, I would only observe, by the way, that as in this Treatise this excellent Author lays the Stress of our Salvation altogether on our FAITH in *Christ Jesus*, I would, if Mr. LOCKE be worthy to be attended to in Opposition to Mr. WOOLSTON and his *Brethren*, refer to their serious Consideration, what a terrible Case they must be in, who *renounce* and *despise* the ONLY Means by which they can be saved; and what must become of their poor immortal Souls, if the Doctrines of the Gospel (which after all their impious Endeavours, they *cannot prove to be false*) should prove *true*!

I AM persuaded, that I need say very little more to convince the Minds of such as are not wilfully prejudiced, and have any Remains of Candour and Ingenuity; and as I would avoid

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running into too great a Length, so I shall only extract from Mr. ADDISON's *Evidences of the Christian Religion*, lately publish'd, some Proofs from *Pagan* and other Authors, of the Truth of the Gospel Dispensation; and then conclude.

THIS Task we shall perform in a summary Manner, and leave it to the Consideration of all our Readers; many of whom, we are persuaded, will be agreeably surpriz'd to see that, considering the *Distance of Time*, and other Circumstances, so much can be produced in Confirmation of this important Argument.

TACITUS, SUETONIUS, and DION, Heathen Authors who lived in or near the Time of our Saviour, mention the Tax laid upon the Roman Empire, by *Augustus Cæsar*, which the Scripture takes Notice of as the Occasion of *Joseph* and the Blessed Virgin's going to *Bethlebem*.

CHALCIDIUS records the Appearance of the New Star which conducted the Wise Men.

MACROBIUS and sundry other Historians mention the Slaughter of the Children by *Herod*.

CELSUS, that great Enemy of Christianity, admits, that our Saviour had been in *Egypt*, and pretends that he learn'd Magic there.

TACITUS informs us, that *Ponius Pilate* was Governor of *Judæa*, and that *Jesus* was brought in Judgment before him, and by him condemned and crucified.

JULIAN the *Apostate*, PORPHYRY and HIEROCLES, all Persecutors of the Christians, confess, that many

many miraculous Cures, and Miracles, out of the ordinary Course of Nature, were wrought by him.

PHLEGON, in his Annals, as *Origen* assures us, attests, that our Saviour foretold several Things which came to pass according to his Prediction; and records, that at the Time of our Saviour's Death, there was a miraculous Darkness and a great Earthquake.

PLINY the Younger, about 70 Years after the Death of Christ, relates, That *Jesus* was worshipped as a God among the Christians: That they would rather suffer Death than blaspheme him: That they received a Sacrament, and by it enter'd into a Vow of abstaining from Sin and Wickedness: That they had private Assemblies of Worship, and used to join together in Hymns: Which Account agrees in all its Circumstances with the Accounts we have in Holy Writ of the first State of Christianity.

JULIAN the *Apostate* never offer'd to deny the Miracles and wonderful Works performed by St. Peter; but attributes them to a Book of Magical Secrets left him by our Saviour.

PORPHYRY objects to Christianity, that since *Jesus* had begun to be worshipped, *Aesculapius* and the rest of the Gods did no more converse with Men: which shews, that the Devils or evil Spirits were subject to them, according to what had been predicted.

CELSUS, who could not run the Lengths of *Woolston*, tho' a bitter and avow'd Enemy of the Christian Religion, attributes those Miracles, which the latter denies and ridicules, to *Art Magic*; and so falls into the Absurdity of the *Jews*, That our Saviour cast out Devils by *Beelzebub the Prince of the Devils*.

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THESE are Authorities and Testimonies of *Pagan* Authors, and some of them Persecutors of Christianity. To which may be added a flagrant Testimony from an Author, who being once an Heathen, was converted by the Force of what he heard and saw, to the Christian Faith. This was **QUADRATUS**, a famous *Athenian* Philosopher, who lived within 60 Years of our Saviour's Crucifixion, and wrote an Apology for Christianity, which was highly esteemed by the most learned *Athenians*: which Apology was extant in the Time of *Leo Viennenis*, Anno 870. This Author, after having shewn that false Miracles were generally wrought in Obscurity, and before few or no Witnesses, speaking of those wrought by our Saviour, has the following Passage: — “ But His Works were always seen, because they were true: They were seen by those who were healed, and by those who were raised from the Dead. Nay, these Persons who were thus healed and raised, were seen not only at the Time of their being healed and raised, but long afterwards. Nay, they were seen not only all the while our Saviour was upon Earth, but survived after his Departure out of this World; nay, some of them were living in our Days.” *Evidences of the Christian Religion*, p. 21.

JUSTIN MARTYR, about 100 Years after Christ, in his Disputes with the Heathen Philosophers, in Presence of the Emperor, and the whole Roman Senate, appeals for the Truth of Christ's Miracles to the Record of *Pontius Pilate*, which he transmitted to *Rome* after the Examples of other Governors of Provinces, and which contained all the Memorable Transactions that happen'd in the Time of his Government: And this he appeals to as a Record then public and extant; which he durst not have done, especially in so

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august a Presence, if his learned Adversaries could have contradicted him. And there is much more Reason to believe, That more excellent and important Pieces have been lost, besides this noble Record, on the Side of Christianity, than on the other Side; especially when it is considered, that all the Powers of the Earth were combin'd to *persecute*, and even to *extirpate* the Faith of Christ, and that the Rulers of the World continued Pagan for almost 300 Years after the Promulgation of the Gospel.

THE same excellent Author farther observes, That it happen'd very providentially for the Honour of the Christian Religion, that it did not take its Rise in the *dark, illiterate Ages of the World*: But at a Time when *Arts and Sciences* were at their *Height*. And 'tis observable, that it had very early, many illustrious Converts to it, who no doubt examin'd strictly, and were throughly satisfy'd of the Truth of our Saviour's History. Three of the earliest, were JOSEPH of *Arimathea*, a Member of the *Jewish Sanhedrim*, DIONYSIUS one of the *Athenian Areopagus*, and FLAVIUS CLEMENS, a Senator, and even Consul of *Rome*. And TERTULLIAN tells the *Roman Governors*, That their Corporations, Councils, Armies, Tribes, Companies, the Palace, the Senate, and Courts of Judicature, were filled with Christians.

ARNOBIVS also asserts, That Men of the finest Parts and Learning, Orators, Grammarians, Rhetoricians, Lawyers, Physicians, Philosophers, despising the Sentiments they had been fond of, took up their Rest in the Christian Religion; and that, no doubt, upon the *fullest Conviction* of the *Truth* of it.

EVERY one of these, in those *Primitive Times* of Christianity took for granted the Truth of those Evan-

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Evangelical Narratives, which now (so many Centuries afterwards) are become the prophane *Jests* and *Ridicule of Apostates and Scoffers*. And many of these must be even *Eye-Witnesses* of the Efficacy of the *Apostles Preaching*, and of the *Miracles* with which they supported the Doctrines they taught. For who could refuse their *Belief* in the *Miracles of Christ*, when they saw those who attested the Truth of them, performing themselves like *Miracles* to those they testify'd of?

'T IS an Observation of IRENÆUS very opposite to our Purpose, in proving the *unerring* and *immutable* Truth of the Christian System, and the faithful Relations of the four Evangelists, that those barbarous Nations, who had at first only learned the History of our Saviour from those who had converted them to Christianity before the Gospels were written, had among them the *same* Accounts of our Saviour, which they afterwards met with in the four Evangelists. An uncontestable Proof of the *Harmony* and *Concurrence* between the *Holy Scripture* and the *Tradition* of the *Churches* in those *early Times* of Christianity; and what must have contributed not a little to make way for the *universal Reception* of the *Holy Gospels*.

THE cruel Deaths and exquisite Tortures which the Primitive Martyrs suffer'd, rather than renounce the Faith of *Jesus*, and be guilty of the least *Hypocrisy*, or *mental Reservation*, which perhaps they might have lived to repent of, and be forgiven for, is another strong Proof of the Truth of that Religion, which *alone* could inspire the illustrious Sufferers with Hopes sufficient to counterballance that strange Variety of exquisite Tortures which they so magnanimously endured.

"FOR my Part, says this excellent Author, when
"I consider that it was not an unaccountable
Obstinacy

The INFIDEL CONVICTED. 55

" Obstinacy in a *single Man*, or in any *particular Set of Men*, in some *extraordinary Furniture* ;
" but that there were *Multitudes* of *each Sex*, of
" *every Age*, of *different Countries* and *Conditions*,
" who, for near 300 *Years together*, made this
" glorious Confession of their Faith, in the midst of
" *Tortures*, and in the *Hour of Death* ; I must
" conclude, that they were either of *another Make* than Men are at present ; or that they
" had such *miraculous Supports* as were *peculiar to those Times* of Christianity, when without
" them, perhaps, the very *Name of it might have been extinguished.*"

AND thus, here is another Difficulty for the Despisers of Faith and Miracles to account for on the Foot of their *boasted Reason*, and in their present Way of Thinking.

We might say still much more, and did intend to add to the preceding Evidences of the Christian Religion from Mr. LOCKE and Mr. ADDISON, some farther Proofs in Confirmation thereof from those great Philosophers Mr. BOYLE and Sir ISAAC NEWTON ; but we are induc'd to believe, that we have said enough to convince an ingenuous Mind ; and all the Evidence that could be farther brought, will not be sufficient to move the Minds of such as are determined against Conviction.

We shall however observe, That 'tis well known, that every one of those four Gentlemen were Adversaries to *Embasism* and *Superstition*, and broke through the *Prejudices of Education*, and struck out *New and Surprizing Lights*, (especially Mr. LOCKE, Mr. BOYLE and Sir ISAAC NEWTON) in all the Branches of *Philosophy*, and yet all their *extensive Discoveries*, and the Effects of their *boundless Enquiries*, serv'd them for

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for no other Purpose (for they were *Modest* as well as *Great Men*; which, by the Way, are Qualities in a manner inseparable) than to increase their *Faith*, and strengthen their *Belief* of the *Mysteries of Providence*, and of the *Truth* of the *Christian Revelation*.

By the much they knew, they found there was much more still to be known; and this taught them that *Humility* with regard to themselves, and that *Submission* with regard to *Providence*, which are the great and constant Attendants of Noble and Capacious Minds; two Qualities, which, how much the *Sceptics* and *Infidels* of the present Age, are wanting in, let their *Works*, and their *Conversations* speak.

YET 'tis farther observable, that every one of these Gentlemen were *Laymen*, and so could not be suspected to be in a Plot to promote that *Priestcraft* which it is so much the Fashion of our present *Ridiculers* of the *Christian Faith*, to cry out upon, and to which they senselessly impute every serious Attempt to promote the Honour of God and Religion.

I SHALL Conclude, with earnest Prayers, that what I have offer'd in so plain, so intelligible, and, as I hope, so *Rational* a Manner, may be attended with such Success, that if it does not convince the *barden'd* Minds of *some*, it may however confirm the *doubting* Minds of others, and inspire them with a due Belief of, and Reverence for, that Sacred Dispensation, which will appear to every *unprejudic'd* *Enquirer*, to be so wisely calculated to promote our Happiness both in *this World*, and in *that to come!*

F I N I S H D O C T R I N E



POSTSCRIPT.

 N Compliance with the Request of a valuable Friend, who is Father of a numerous Family, and has been particularly affected by the following melancholy Letter, we insert it here. It was publish'd in one of the Weekly Papers in September last; and contains an Account of a Case that seems a Second to that of the unhappy Gentleman in the Temple, which we hinted at p. 22. who, unable to contend with the shocking Uncertainties that his Deistical Acquaintance had involved him in, laid violent Hands on himself to experience the Certainty of those Truths which he had been taught to question.

SIR,

I AM a constant Reader of your Papers, and like them very well, and am, above all Things, satisfied with those excellent Pieces in them that so pathetically represent the *Decay of Religion and Morality* amongst us in this Age; and I assure you, if a Stop be not put to the Corruption both of *Principles* and *Practices* which now prevail among the *younger Sort*, that I firmly believe, Heaven, by some heavy Judgments, will interpose, and work our Reformation; for there's no correcting and reforming of *Nations*, when their Iniquities are full, but in this Way.

H

THERE

58 POSTSCRIPT.

THERE is no Man living upon the Face of the Earth hath so much Reason to complain of this as I have, — and I am perswaded that you will join Issue with me in the following Account.

I HAD a Son, who was always brought up under my Eye ; in Religion and Learning he made an equal Progress ; he was a Comfort to his Parents, and a Credit to our Minister, who instructed him. All that examined him declared, that his Judgment in Things was solid beyond his Years, and that he had Learning, without its Attendants in our public Places of Literature at this Day, viz. Vice and Immorality.

I WAS over-persuaded to put him in the *Temple*, where he had continued almost a Year ; he came down in the Vacation Time to see us ; but I found a strange Alteration in him as to Religion ; he had entirely lost that *Seriousness* in it that he had from his Infancy ; he lay in Bed on Sundays commonly 'till Noon, and I found that it was with a Kind of Reluctancy he went to Church but once a Day, and was become extremely backward to read Prayers in the Family, which he did before with the greatest Fervency and Zeal ; at which I was much disturb'd.

TERM-Time returning, he dutifully took his Leave of me and his Mother, and return'd to his Chambers. But he had scarce been a Month there, before I was sent for to receive his last Breath. I made, upon the receiving this afflicting Account, ready immediately for my Journey ; and indeed when I came to *London*, I found him delirious and senseless, — the Surgeon with him, who, by Order of the Physician, had open'd a Vein in each Arm ; for his Distemper was a violent burning Fever,

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Fever, attended with a Pleurisy. Next Morning he came to himself; whereupon, to keep him from the Noise of Company, I got him removed to a Friend's House.

WHEN he was settled in a convenient Chair, I sat down by him; then he fell upon my Face and wept; after he had given a Vent to his Tears, he spoke thus; Oh! if the Minister, my Master, was here, I would open my Mind to him, for the *Flame* of my *Conscience* is more violent than that of my *Fever*; but since he is not, therefore, — saith he, — I will act the sincere Part of the repenting Prodigal with you.

You must imagine that the Address surprized me, but the Tenderness of a Father gave Way to it, expecting that what he had to say might be grounded upon the Remissness in the Duties of Religion, which I observed in him, as I have told you.

BUT, alas! the Case was quite otherwise! — he made a Confession to me that I never expected. — "Father, — I must, to my Confusion, own, — that I have been a *Deist* since I came here. "I stood it out, it is true, for a Month, — "but my Companions brought me *Barborack's* Prefatory Introduction to *Puffendorf's* Law of Nature and Nations, and from thence argued, "that Christian Religion, now profesi'd, was no more but the *Comments* of the *Fathers*, who at best were but a Pack of *Enthusiasts*, *Persecutors*, *Immoral*, *Ignorant*, and *Sanguinary Villains*! and that *Pythagoras*, *Tales*, *Anaxagoras*, &c. and above all, that * *Confucius*, the

* How excellently has Mr. *LOCKE* confuted this profane Plea, in the Passages we have quoted from him P. 44, 45?

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“ Chinese Philosopher, had more Religion and
“ Morality than all the Fathers put together.—
“ At last they jested on the Trinity, and on the
“ Incarnation of the Son of God, as the Effects
“ of the Holy Fathers Enthusiasm and Stupidity.

“ AND what above all took most with me,
“ was a rigid Dissenter’s saying, That there was
“ nothing in Religion : As for his Part, he’d
“ form himself into that Shape by the which
“ he thought he should get most Practice in the
“ Law.

“ HAVING, by these Arguments, given the
“ Loose to my former Principles, I enter’d into
“ all the Measures of Excess with them ; the
“ Consequence of which is my present Distemper.”
He had scarce ended this most astonishing Account
to me, but that his Pleurisy return’d, and again
he was blooded, and to the next Morning he
open’d not his Mouth.

HOWEVER, in a few Weeks he recovered so
much Strength as to go by easy Journeys into
the Country : where I got, to his Desire, the
Fathers, and best Commentaries on the Bible,
from which he made Collections upon most of
the moral Virtues, and concluded, that there could
be no inward Peace, without a saving Knowledge
of them, as contained in the Scriptures, together
with the Comments of the Fathers on them in the
first Ages of the Church, — and almost was always
a-weeping, for Fear God had cast him off for his
Degeneracy.

ONE Day, in the Summer-house, as he turn’d
his Eye upon Salvian, he said, — “ Honour’d
“ Father, — I think the State of this Nation is
“ very

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" very much like that of the *Romans*, when the
" *Gotbs* and *Vandals* subdued them ; they profess'd
" Christianity, yet, in the mean Time, they made
" a *Fest* of every Virtue it enjoyn'd ; — for
" which, saith he, God disown'd them so far, —
" that they became tame Slaves to those barbarous
" People to whom before they would not vouch-
" safe the Honour of *Alliance* or of *Peace*.

FROM the Summer-house we went into the Hall ; but he no sooner sat down, but that a tickling Cough seiz'd him, which gradually encreased 'till it came to the highest Degree of Vehemence, and at last by it there broke an Ulcer in his Lungs, which immediately strangled or suffocated him. To mention my Grief is needless. God only knows how great it is ! — I only write this for the Warning of others, — especially to *young Students of the Law*, — that they may not be the Cause of so great Sorrow to their Parents in this corrupt Age as my Son hath been to his tender Mother and me.

I am, &c.

W. B.

THE Degeneracy of a hopeful Son, just at the Time when the indulgent Parent was expecting to reap the Fruits of the good Seeds he had so carefully sown in his Mind, and which, as he flatter'd himself, he had already perceived beginning to blossom out to the Honour of his Name and Family, is certainly one of the most melancholy and affecting Trials that can happen to human Nature. Such tender Parents, as are wont to watch with Transport the beautiful Dawn of the Morning of Life in their Childrens Minds, and to please themselves with the hopeful Prospect arising from thence of the Resplendency of their fuller Day of Manhood, can best account for the Pangs that must torture and rack the Soul of the good Father, who having safely conducted his Child by the Hand from helpless Infancy through the first dangerous Years of Youth, beholds him at last, by the Force of evil Examples, seduced from his Duty, and making a Forfeit of his Virtue and Religion at his first Entrance into

(what

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(what we may call) *Independent Life*. This is a Case that cannot possibly be described; and we shall leave it on the Reflexion of all such as are the Occasions of so terrible and truly diabolical a Seduction, what they must have to answer for, both to God and to their Fellow-Creatures, on this Account: A Reflexion that one time or other, (and, perhaps, when they are least prepared to support it) will probably find them out, and fill their Minds with insupportable Anguish.

BUT there is one thing more, that we must take notice of, however reluctantly, relating to the Principles of some of the Gentlemen to whose Care the Education of Youth is intrusted at the Universities. 'Tis indeed with great Regret, that we are obliged to mention any thing that may be supposed to reflect Dishonour upon those famous Seminaries of Learning, for which we have all imaginable Deference and Veneration: But it is too true, and so notorious, that it cannot be concealed, That even THERE, at the Fountain-head, our Youth too often receive those early Taints of Infidelity, which make them Susceptible of that Infection which afterwards overspreads their whole Minds.

WE but just mention this deplorable Truth, in order to recommend it, which we do with all possible Earnestness, to the serious Consideration of all Fathers and Guardians who have at Heart the Honour of God and Religion, and the future Welfare and Happiness of their Children and Wards, that they thoroughly satisfy themselves in Relation to the *unsuspected Soundness* of the Tutor's *Christian Principles*. It ought not to be thought sufficient that such a one contents himself to be accounted a *mere Moral Man*: For tho' the Ties of *Morality*, join'd with Motives from *common Prudence*, may be able to with-hold *Him*, in his College-Life, from open Scandals, yet they may not be strong enough for the *Young Gentleman*, when, stimulated, perhaps, by *violent Appetites*, and supported by *plentiful and insinuating Circumstances*, he is permitted to launch out into a World abounding with Temptations and Dangers, which require a l the Hold that Religion can take on his Passions of *Hope* and *Fear*, to controul and withstand. But as I intend this only for a Caution, which I am sorry I am obliged to think necessary, I shall say no more of it in this Place.

THE END.



